

**Charter Commissioner:** Tom Stewart

**SAUGUS CHARTER COMMISSION  
– JULY 10, 2008-  
Step 3 – Develop Possible Solutions**

**Government Model** Mayor/Council  
(number, title, or phrase)

<b>Executive</b>	There shall be a mayor elected to a two-year term. There shall be a preliminary election to narrow the field of candidates down to the two top vote-getters followed six weeks later by a final election. Should there be only two candidates, then there shall be no preliminary election. The mayor shall set policy together with the council and shall be responsible for directing the day to day operations of the various departments.
<b>Legislative</b>	There shall be a 13 member council consisting of one member elected from each of the ten precincts and three elected at large. Initially, the odd numbered precinct councilors and two at-large councilors shall be elected to two-year terms and the even numbered councilors and one at-large councilor shall be elected to four-year terms. Thereafter, all councilors will serve four-year terms. The at-large councilor elected to the first four-year term shall serve as council chair for the first three years of the council's existence. A second at-large councilor shall serve as a voting member of the school committee and the remaining at-large councilor shall serve as the chair of the Finance Committee. These two councilors shall exchange positions for the second year of their term. In the third year, the newly-elected at-large councilors shall serve one on the school committee and one as chair of the Finance Committee. After the third year, the at-large councilors shall rotate between serving in these three posts on an annual basis.
<b>School Committee</b>	There shall be five school committee members elected to serve together with the at-large councilor. The chair of the school committee shall be elected by the members to a two-year term with no preference to the top vote-getter. The chair shall only vote in the case of a tie vote. Initially, two school committee members shall be elected to two-year terms and the remaining three to four-year terms. Thereafter, all terms shall be for four years.
<b>Elections</b>	Elections shall be held every two years to elect a Mayor, half of the council and half of the school committee. If necessary, there shall be a preliminary election to narrow the mayoral candidates down to two. Should there be a mayoral vacancy in the last six months of the term,

	<p>then the council chair shall assume the duties of mayor until the next election. A mayoral vacancy earlier in the term shall cause a new cycle of preliminary and final elections to elect a new mayor to fill the remainder of the term. Should there be a vacancy in one of the ten precinct councilors, there shall be a precinct-wide election to fill the vacancy as long as more than six months remain in the term; otherwise, the remaining councilors will appoint a resident of the precinct with the vacancy to serve the remainder of the term. A vacancy in one of the three at-large councilor seats shall be filled by the next highest vote-getter from the most recent biennial election. This person will serve out the remainder of the term vacated.</p>
<b>Finance</b>	<p>There shall be a nine member Finance Committee consisting of four appointees of the mayor, four appointees of the council and one at-large councilor serving as chair. The finance committee shall employ an auditor who will report on a bimonthly basis on the status of finances. This person shall have access to all records kept by the treasurer/collector, accountant and department heads inasmuch as they relate to budget and finance.</p>
<b>Budget</b>	<p>By December 15 of each year, the mayor and council shall develop a joint statement of policy priorities which shall serve as guidance for budget development. The at-large councilor serving on the school committee shall be responsible for ensuring that that committee's concerns are also considered in the development of this budget guidance. After consulting with department heads, the mayor shall develop a budget and present it to the council by January 31. The mayor shall also give a bottom-line figure to the school committee which will then present a budget back to the mayor by January 31. After at least one public hearing, the council may cut from any line item but shall only recommend increases to budget line items. The council then moves the budget and any recommendations for line item increases to the Finance Committee prior to March 1<sup>st</sup>. Throughout March and April, the Finance Committee shall hold public hearings on the budget and must send a completed budget back to the council by May 15. The Finance Committee shall also have the authority to cut from any line item but may only increase individual line items via action on the recommendations of the council which shall be considered motions before the Finance Committee. A two-thirds vote of the Finance Committee shall be required for any such line item increase. By June 15, the council must hold at least one more public hearing and a majority vote of the council shall be required to adopt the final budget. Again, at this point, the council shall be empowered to cut from any line item but shall not be allowed to increase any line items with the exception of an increase to the bottom line figure of the school budget which shall require a two-thirds vote of the council.</p>